MY HOME ARMENIA

ARMENIA FUND MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

#03 / MAY 2015

BREATHING NEW LIFE INTO CHARENTSAVAN

THE RECONSTRUCTION OF A MUSIC POWERHOUSE IN STEPANAKERT

A LESSON FROM THE ANCIENTS: WATER AND DEVELOPMENT IN TAVUSH
In 1967, an industrial city founded by the Soviet regime was named after poet Yeghishe Charents. That same year, the city’s main medical center, the Charentsavan Hospital, was opened.

Today, almost half a century later, with the Soviet Union long gone, the populations of Armenia’s Soviet-era industrial cities are still grappling with a host of socioeconomic problems. That’s because these towns have yet to fully recover from the economic collapse of the early 1990s, when factories were shut down overnight and thousands upon thousands found themselves out of work. Charentsavan, about 35 kilometers from Yerevan, is one such community.

Following Armenia’s independence, most expectant mothers in Charentsavan opted to receive obstetric care in Yerevan. As the capital is relatively close and offers incomparably better medical care, at least 100 women annually gave birth there. That trend changed sharply in 2010, when the Hayastan All-Armenian Fund, with the financial support of its Dutch affiliate, completely renovated the maternity ward of the Charentsavan Hospital.

Newborns
18 Nurses
5 Gynecologists
1 Neonatologist

The hospital’s Dutch affiliate, which was established in 1994, does not miss a chance to support vitally important healthcare projects in Armenia. Prior to sponsoring the Charentsavan maternity ward initiative, it made possible the complete renovation of the health clinic of Knarhtakar, a village in the Tavush Region. It is also worth noting that one of the affiliate’s earliest projects was its sponsorship of Yerevan’s Arabic Pediatric Hospital.

The project has literally breathed new life into the facility. It now has two delivery rooms instead of one, and its battered and leaky roof has been replaced. In fact, nothing has remained form the old, decrepit delivery room. Today, in this marvelously renovated, fully equipped, and comfortable space, the birth of a child is all the more joyous for parents and medical staff alike.

“The tender loving care shown by Armenian mothers to their children is not enough for raising a healthy and normal child,” says Ara Vardanyan, executive director of the Fund. “That love and affection must be complemented by the availability of quality, modern medical facilities, which are of enormous importance to every phase of a child’s life. This is why the Fund pays considerable attention to the reconstruction of medical institutions and particularly maternity wards in Armenia and Artsakh.”

Dr. Arshak Galobekyan, chief of internal medicine at the hospital, says: “The birth of a child is a momentous event that literally breathes new life into the entire family of mothers, fathers, and grandparents. It is a momentous event that we look forward to, and the same is true for the fund.”

The hospital of Charentsavan serves not only its population of almost 25,000, but the more than 10,000 residents of nearby rural communities. Annually, over 370 children are delivered at the maternity ward — which means the cry of a newly delivered baby is heard here on a daily basis.

The entrance of the Charentsavan Hospital’s Maternity Section.

A newborn being cared for by one of the nurses.

A scene in the hospital:
Newborns and patients in their clean, heated patient rooms.

Photo by Arshak Galobekyan, chief of internal medicine at the hospital.

Photo by Arshak Galobekyan, chief of internal medicine at the hospital.
A LESSON FROM THE ANCIENTS: WATER AND DEVELOPMENT IN TAVUSH

Babylon, Sumer, Egypt, and Urartu, city-states that became great empires. Fed by the waters of the Tigris and Euphrates, the Nile, Araxes, and Kura, Lake Van and Sevan, these settlements were transformed into powerful states that initiated the era of modern civilization. Writing systems, laws, education, and other innovations were founded upon the banks of these bodies of water — literally and figuratively. Heavily vested in agriculture, these burgeoning cities used a technology never before seen to fuel their awesome growth. That technology was irrigation.

The Armenia Fund Rural Development Program has a simple goal: to help make border villages in Armenia sustainable. These villages are located in some of the most dangerous parts of Armenia, often along highly militarized parts of the border that are subject to attacks by Azerbaijan. The Tavush region, in the northeast of the country, is especially susceptible. While evaluating how best to approach development in Tavush, it was clear that there were many issues that needed attention: health, education, social services, among others. But, like many rural parts of Armenia, the local economy was dependent on agriculture and without the work and revenue brought by agricultural production, the people were leaving.

Being the regular target of indiscriminate enemy fire aside, the villages gravely felt the sudden economic and political collapse of the early 1990s. Even before many volunteers from the local villages in Tavush signed up to defend their lands and fight in the Artsakh War, Gorbatchev’s anti-alcohol reforms had wrought havoc on the local wine industry, which eventually fell into disrepair.

Armenia Fund’s needs assessment found was that there was no shortage of arable land in Tavush. Actually, the problem keeping resilient villagers from getting the crop yields they needed was that the irrigation infrastructure had fallen apart. Irrigation pipes and canals were broken and leaking, water was being lost along the way, and crop fields were unproductive. If agriculture was going to secure the future of Tavush, a modern and efficient system of agricultural waterways would be needed. And that’s exactly what the Rural Development Program set out to do.

An irrigation system was reconstructed between Khachatark (4.6 miles from the border), Lusavorit (4.9 miles from the border), and Dilavan villages, as well as one that existed at Aknaghyur. A canal between Aghashovit and Vazashen, whose pumping station was stranded in Azerbaijan after the war, was restored and the course of the pipeline was changed to accommodate a pumping station that now rests a few hundred feet inside the border in Armenia. Another canal, where the flow of water is propelled by gravity, was restored for the community of Kirants.

In all, Armenia Fund spent over $1.85 million to rebuild an irrigation network in Tavush that has made 107,600,000 square feet (2,471 acres) of land — about the size of Rhode Island — arable. The materials used in the construction as well as the engineering of the irrigation systems are of a quality that’s expected of Armenia Fund and will continue to serve the communities for which they were built into the foreseeable future.

The irrigated land allowed Tavush to revive its ancient wine-making industry and it facilitated the growing of cash crops that have brought much needed revenue to the local population. Farmers and their families — over 10,000 people throughout the region — have directly benefited from the newly irrigated land. And, along with the greenhouses that Armenia Fund has been financing in the same region, Tavush has the potential to become a vibrant center of agriculture.

It may be too early to make any predictions but if history is any indicator, proper irrigation and fertile land can make for a powerful combination. Although Armenia will need to continue developing several varied industries as it looks to the future, growing agricultural production in Tavush will be one of its anchors, as it was for great civilizations in the past.
Thanks to the irrigation canal built by Armenia Fund, the local agro-economy is booming. Have a young man is preparing the soil for a new batch of seedlings.
THE RECONSTRUCTION OF A MUSIC POWERHOUSE IN STEPARANAKERT

Ever since childhood, I’ve been concerned about old people and children. They are more vulnerable than others and are often unable to take care of themselves. Children, the elderly, and people with disabilities need our help, and I think every Armenian who has the means to improve their lives must do so.” These are the words of Armen Shakhnazaryan.

A Russian-Armenian philanthropist and founder of the Luding Group of Companies, Shakhnazaryan is a top benefactor of the Hayastan All-Armenian Fund. Since 2010, the Moscow-based industrialist has made several large contributions to the pan-Armenian organization. After donating $360,000 to the “Water is Life” program, he went on to sponsor the reconstruction of two institutions in the capital of Artsakh: the Stepanakert Retirement Home and the Sayat Nova Conservatory.

Back in 1963, the founding of the conservatory was a great achievement for the Armenian population of Artsakh, which was under Soviet Azerbaijan rule at the time. And although the school has always had an instrumental role in contributing to the vitality of Artsakhian culture, it has never undergone a major renovation and in recent decades languished in a state of severe disrepair. Today the conservatory, which comprises ten specialized departments, has 127 students. Its refurbishment has resulted in a vastly improved educational environment. It has even hosted a visit by world-renowned soprano Montserrat Caballé.

“All the ingredients are there for our young students to express themselves artistically and develop their creative talents,” says Artsakh Minister of Youth and Culture Nairine Aghabalyan. “Given the support and goodwill of luminaries such as Montserrat Caballé, I think we can make great strides and produce generations of outstanding musicians.”

One of the conservatory’s lecture halls has been named after Montserrat Caballé, not only as a gesture of respect toward the acclaimed soprano, but a promise to make an impact on the international musical arena through her kind advice and assistance.

Shakhnazaryan has shown a son’s affection toward the senior citizens sheltered at the Stepanakert Retirement Home. These seniors, who were once utterly alone and unprotected because of circumstances beyond their control, have since 2011 resided in a wonderful retirement home that provides them with all necessary creature comforts, thanks to Shakhnazaryan’s generosity.

Next came the turn of the young generation, as Shakhnazaryan displayed the kindness of a father toward the youth of Stepanakert, by setting his sights on refurbishing the Sayat Nova Conservatory.

The students are proud of their college, which is always well kept and clean.

Shakhnazaryan’s generosity has been praised by many, but he remains humble about it. "I believe that every Armenian has a duty to contribute to their community and help those in need," he says. "Artsakh is our home and it's important that we work together to make it a better place for everyone."
Աստվածաբանության դեմ կարճ գրքի մշակող ծրագրի պաշտոնական ծրագրի էջից:

"Աստվածաբանության դեմ կան զգացմունքների կազմակերպություն, որն առանձնանում է դիպլոմայի և մասնագիտության բարձրությամբ դիմումներով, մայրաքաղաքների, հանրապետության մեջ։ Այս ծրագիրը մտնում է նաև բազմազանության և համազգային դեմ կան զգացմունքների ընդարձակման պայմանների համար իրավատերություն։ Այս ծրագիրը իրավատեր է համարվում ինչպես կան զգացմունքների կազմակերպման ոլորտի և այն կողմից, որոնք կարողանում են նաև զգացմունքների կազմակերպմանը կազմում և համազգային դեմ կան զգացմունքների ընդարձակման պայմանների համար։ Այս ծրագիրն իրավատեր է համարվում ինչպես կան զգացմունքների կազմակերպման ոլորտի և այն կողմից, որոնք կարողանում են նաև զգացմունքների կազմակերպմանը կազմում և համազգային դեմ կան զգացմունքների ընդարձակման պայմանների համար։

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Your continued support is making a real difference in Armenia’s borderline regions. Thank you for being part of our nation-building mission!